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LETTER DATED 15 OCTOBER 1999 FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to convey the attached communication, dated 14 October 1999 (see annex), which I have received from the Permanent Representative of Australia to the United Nations.

I should be grateful if you would bring the communication to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) Kofi A. ANNAN

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Annex

Letter dated 14 October 1999 from the Permanent Representative of Australia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

In accordance with Security Council resolution 1264 (1999) of 15 September 1999, I attach the second periodic report on the operations of the International Force, East Timor (INTERFET) (see appendix). I would appreciate your making the report available to the Security Council.

(Signed) Penny WENSLEY

Appendix

Second periodic report to the United Nations on the operations of the International Force, East Timor (INTERFET), 29 September to 12 October 1999

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Since the first periodic report was forwarded to the Security Council, the International Force, East Timor (INTERFET) has continued to deploy multinational forces and conduct patrols further into East Timor. While many East Timorese are now returning to Dili, militia activity remains a significant concern, particularly in the western regions and other outlying areas.

2. Humanitarian relief efforts have shifted away from air drops to the distribution of aid on the ground. This decision was based on the ability of aid agencies to undertake more effective distribution by means of road transport, the improved security in some areas and safety concerns associated with air drops.

II. COOPERATION WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF INDONESIA

3. INTERFET continues to consult with the Government of Indonesia on operations. The Government has advised that it wishes to assist with the repatriation of displaced persons from West Timor to East Timor, and this is being coordinated with INTERFET.

4. Since the first periodic report, Indonesia has continued to withdraw its forces from East Timor. Approximately 1,300 TNI (the Indonesian military) soldiers remain, with TNI-AU (Air Force) and INTERFET sharing security responsibilities at Comoro airfield. INTERFET and TNI now also share joint control of the power station in Dili.

III. RESTORATION OF PEACE AND SECURITY

Deployment activities

5. Members of the multinational force are continuing their deployments to East Timor, following acclimatization and briefings in Townsville and Darwin, Australia. As at 12 October, the total INTERFET deployment numbered around 5,650 personnel. The build up of multinational forces will continue through to the end of October, when the total force will number around 7,500 personnel.

6. To date, INTERFET is represented by contingents from Australia, Brazil, France, Italy, Malaysia, New Zealand, Norway, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America. Forces from Canada, Germany, Ireland and the Republic of Korea will arrive in East Timor over the coming weeks. Negotiations are

continuing with a number of other Member States that have expressed interest in contributing forces to INTERFET.

Restoring security

7. INTERFET has conducted patrols to Com and Los Palos in the east and to Balibo, Batugade and Maliana in the west. Significant forces remain in Baucau and the western regencies. Further moves into outlying areas of East Timor will be undertaken as force numbers build up over the coming weeks.

8. Dili residents continue to demonstrate their increased sense of safety. Despite the very poor state of the infrastructure in Dili, an estimated 64,000 previously displaced persons have now returned to the capital. On 12 October, Dili market reopened after reconstruction by INTERFET. These are tangible measures of the impact of the INTERFET presence.

9. INTERFET continues to enforce an apprehension and detention policy in accordance with its mandate. All detainees are treated fairly and, as part of its accountability efforts, the INTERFET detention centre was inspected by TNI, the Indonesian National Police (POLRI), civilian police of the United Nations Mission in East Timor (UNAMET) and representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross. All groups expressed their satisfaction with the detention arrangements and the release protocols.

Activities of the militia

10. Since the deployment of multinational forces commenced, the various militia groups have made threats to INTERFET, stating their intention to control the western regencies. During the initial deployment of INTERFET, militia continued to be active in areas outside Dili but did not attempt to engage INTERFET. However, since operations have commenced close to West Timor, INTERFET forces have exchanged fire with armed militia groups on four occasions.

11. On 6 October, INTERFET had cause to fire upon militia in East Timor on two separate occasions in the vicinity of Suai. The first incident involved INTERFET stopping militia vehicles attempting to crash through a road checkpoint. Six militia were wounded, with four flown by helicopter to INTERFET medical facilities in Dili. A total of 116 militia were detained and a number of weapons confiscated.

12. The second incident occurred as an INTERFET vehicle escorting the detainees from the first incident came under fire from a militia ambush. Two INTERFET soldiers were wounded and repatriated to Darwin following treatment in Dili. Two militia were killed in the exchange of fire and their weapons recovered.

13. The third incident occurred on 9 October when a militia group fired upon an INTERFET patrol in the vicinity of Alto Lebos (1.5 km from the border with West Timor). The INTERFET patrol returned fire and one militia member was killed.

14. A similar incident occurred on 10 October, when INTERFET forces were patrolling towards the village of Motaain near the border. Militia, accompanied by TNI forces and POLRI, engaged INTERFET forces. INTERFET troops were fired on

first. They returned fire in self-defence and the militia withdrew from East Timor. Details of casualties have yet to be confirmed but at least one Indonesian person may have been killed. INTERFET swiftly contacted the local POLRI commander. After comparing maps, this officer agreed that INTERFET troops were in East Timor when the incident occurred and that his troops had fired first. However, there was some disagreement over the precise location of the border.

15. These last two incidents illustrate the problems of maintaining security along the border between East Timor and West Timor and the security problems caused by militia crossing from West Timor into East Timor to engage INTERFET forces. INTERFET is urgently seeking discussions with Indonesian authorities to avoid future incidents.

16. The incident at Motaain also illustrates continuing support from elements of the Indonesian security forces for the militias, which is a matter of serious concern.

Contact with other groups

17. The Armed Forces for the National Liberation of East Timor (Falintil) remain armed but they have not undertaken military activity except in self-defence. INTERFET is seeking to disarm all groups in East Timor, other than TNI. In order to maintain peace, INTERFET has instituted an interim working policy of allowing Falintil to retain their weapons only while they remain in designated cantonments. Carriage of weapons outside these areas would result in INTERFET action to disarm them.

Protection and support of UNAMET

18. UNAMET has 58 staff in its compound in Dili. UNAMET has also re-established its offices in Baucau, with INTERFET providing security.

Facilitation of humanitarian assistance operations

19. Humanitarian road convoys have successfully distributed food and emergency supplies to Baucau and Los Palos (30 September), Manatuto and Kaurui (3 October), Viqueque (4 and 5 October) and Liquica (6 October). Unescorted United Nations aid convoys are now permitted on designated roads between Dili, Baucau, Los Palos and Viqueque.

20. Based on advice from INTERFET concerning the security environment in Dili, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has undertaken the repatriation of East Timorese from camps in West Timor. The first flights carrying returning East Timorese commenced on 8 October.

IV. OBSERVATIONS

Management of the INTERFET trust fund

21. Terms of reference for the INTERFET trust fund were agreed upon on 29 September. Portugal has contributed US$ 5 million, Japan has announced a contribution of US$ 100 million and Switzerland has announced a contribution of SwF 500,000. Other States are also considering contributions.

22. The fund will reimburse eligible countries for the costs of their participation. Assistance will be available to contributors once contingents have been called forward by INTERFET.

V. OUTLOOK

Transition to the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor

23. In order to secure a seamless transition to the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET), as envisaged in the report of the Secretary-General (S/1999/1024), a Security Council resolution is a matter of some urgency. On current planning, the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) of Indonesia is likely to make its determination on East Timor before the end of October. This underscores the urgency of a Security Council resolution, notwithstanding that the mandate of INTERFET is not affected by the MPR decision and that its authority continues until it is replaced by UNTAET. Given the continuing volatile security situation in East Timor, the successor force to INTERFET should have a robust operational mandate.

Civil administration

24. As indicated in the first periodic report, it is imperative that urgent steps be taken to address the absence of effective civil administration in East Timor and that the civil administration elements of UNTAET be brought forward as much as possible.